From:	Anthony Burton
To:	mdove@fec.gov
Subject:	ActBlue and Public Financing
Date:	12/10/2007 03:33 PM

Dear Mary Dove,

I'm writing today to encourage the FEC to allow funds raised via online entities like ActBlue to be eligible for matching funds.

As we all know, the internet has changed just about everything. People shop online to the extent that "Black Friday" is now followed by "Cyber Monday" to begin the Holiday shopping season. People pay bills online, renew licenses, even meet future spouses. With the rapidity of the change, it's often hard to keep up. But I think most folks agree that the internet has been a force for positive change.

In addition to the many personal benefits and conveniences the internet confers, it has also been a boon to American Democracy. In 2004 we saw Howard Dean change the way campaigns raised money. Of a sudden, millions of dollars were pouring in via the internet. What made this all the more exciting is that many of these contributions were relatively small, and came from citizens who had not contributed to campaigns. The internet has helped engage millions of people in the ongoing experiem3ent of American Democracy. Indeed, the internet has helped reinvigorate our Democracy.

Organizations such as ActBlue came into being as a result of that re-invigoration. As I'm sure the FEC knows, ActBlue is a single destination where citizens may go to contribute their money to any number of candidates. ActBlue is providing a service to our Democracy and making citizen engagement and participation easier for many people. Citizens make individual; contributions to candidates, and ActBlue passes along those funds to the specified candidates.

Now, due to the manner in which this "clearinghouse" works, inc which Act Blue makes large disbursements to canadidates, rather than passing on each contribution individually, it would seem that contributions made through ActBlue are not eligible for Matching Funds. But the law governing matching funds was written in an age before the internet had blossomed into the engine for Democracy that it has become. I strongly encourage

the FEC to consider the spirit of the law, as well as the letter of the law. The spirit of the law would suggest that individuals who make their contributions via ActBlue have just as much right to have their contributions matched as do contributors who gave directly to a campaign.

As I see it, this is NOT an issue about the candidates, it is an issue about the rights of the citizen contributors who have every reason to expect that their individual contributions will be treated equally no matter if they were made via ActBlue, or directly to a campaign.

The public financing system is designed to let campaigns match small dollar contributions from supporters. ActBlue helps facilitate those small dollar contributions. There's no reason contributions via ActBlue should not count for public financing purposes.

Many thanks for your consideration,
Anthony Burton
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